

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-12

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S E C R E T ATHENS 5712

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, PORG, TU, GK
SUBJECT: DEMILITARIZED GREEK ISLANDS

REF: STATE 166003

1. THE GOT'S OFFICIAL APPROACH TO THE DEPARTMENT AT THIS TIME ON THE QUESTION OF GREECE'S FORTIFICATION OF ITS AEGEAN ISLANDS, AFTER MORE THAN THREE YEARS (REFTEL), COULD BE AN EFFORT TO COUNTER THE INHERENT SYMPATHY FOR THE RE-NEWED GREEK PROPOSAL FOR A NON-AGGRESSION PACT. THIS MISSION HAS REPORTED THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS THAT THE GREEKS HAVE BEEN STEADILY STRENGTHENING THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE MAIN ISLANDS OF THE EASTERN AEGEAN. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE NO SECRET, AND GREEK OFFICIALS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY FRANK IN DISCUSSING THEM IN BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC.

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2. THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT THE BASIC TENET OF THE GOG'S POSITION IS THAT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW EVERY STATE HAS THE RIGHT TO DEFEND ITSELF. ADDITIONALLY, THE GREEKS ARGUE:

--THAT GREECE HAS A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO FORTIFY ITS AEGEAN ISLANDS IN THE FACE OF THE CURRENT THREAT IN THAT AREA POSED

BY AN "EXPANSIONIST" TURKEY. WHILE GREEKS ADMIT THAT SOME REINFORCEMENT BEGAN BEFORE THE 1974 CRISIS, THEY EMPHASIZE THAT THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS -- A VIVID MANIFESTATION IN THEIR EYES OF TURKISH AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS -- IS WHAT NECESSITATED STEPPING UP THE PROCESS. (A COROLLARY TO THIS ARGUMENT IS THAT THE TURKISH INVASION WOULD HAVE FAILED IF THE GREEK CONTINGENT HAD NOT BEEN REMOVED FROM CYPRUS IN 1967.)

-- THAT THE FORTIFICATION OF THE ISLANDS IS STRICTLY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES. IT WOULD BE ABSURD TO THINK THE MANPOWER AND MILITARY HARDWARE ON THE ISLANDS THREATEN TURKEY.

-- THAT, TO THE CONTRARY, IT IS TURKEY WHICH CREATED THE "AEGEAN ARMY" AND WHICH POSSESSES THE NECESSARY AMPHIBIOUS CRAFT TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK ON THE NEARBY GREEK ISLANDS.

-- THAT THREATENING STATEMENTS ON THE AEGEAN BY ANNEXATION OF ALEXANDRETTA, AND INVASION OF CYPRUS BY TURKEY CONSTITUTE VIOLATIONS OF COMMITMENTS TO REFRAIN FROM THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE OR FURTHER TERRITORIAL EXPANSION CONTAINED IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL TREATIES.

3. AS FAR AS THE ISLANDS OF LEMNOS AND SAMOTHRACE ARE CONCERNED, THE GREEKS CONTEND THAT THE 1936 MONTREUX TREATY SUPERCEDED THE 1923 LAUSANNE TREATY. THEY CLAIM, FOR INSTANCE, THAT DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY RATI-
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FICATION PROCESS THEN TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER ARRAS CATEGORICALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAUSANNE TREATY DEALING WITH THE DEMILITARIZATION OF THESE TWO ISLANDS "ARE ALSO ABROGATED BY THE TREATY OF MONTREUX." THE GREEKS HOLD THAT AT LAUSANNE THE CONFERENCE REJECTED THE TURKISH CALL FOR A COMPLETE DEMILITARIZATION OF LESVOS, CHIOS, SAMOS AND IKARA, AND INSTEAD IMPOSED ON BOTH PARTIES THE OBLIGATION IN ARTICLE 13 TO RESPECT THE MILITARY BALANCE THEREBY ESTABLISHED. THUS, THEY CONTINUE, TURKEY'S BUILD-UP IN ANATOLIA GIVES GREECE THE RIGHT TO ADOPT RECIPROCAL MEASURES. FINALLY, THE GREEKS POINT OUT THAT TURKEY IS NOT A SIGNATOR OF THE PARIS TREATY GOVERNING THE DODECANESE ISLANDS AND, THEREFORE, AS A THIRD PARTY HAS NO RIGHT TO INVOKE RIGHTS ACCRUING FROM IT.

5. WE DEFER TO THE DEPARTMENT, OF COURSE, ON WHATEVER ACTION THE USG SHOULD TAKE. HOWEVER, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO LIKELIHOOD THE GOG WILL CEASE FORTIFYING ITS KEY ISLANDS. WE MUST CONSIDER THAT FOR US TO RAISE THIS ISSUE WITHOUT OFFERING SOME FORM OF SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR THE ISLANDS IS LIKELY NOT ONLY TO

BE A FUTILE GESTURE BUT WOULD PROVOKE A HIGHLY NEGATIVE
REACTION SERIOUSLY DAMAGING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH
GREECE.
MILLS

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